

Message Text

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42

ACTION SS-25

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P 041240Z OCT 76

FM AMEMBASSY MANAMA BAHRAIN
TO SECSTATE WASHINGTON DC PRIORITY 3580

C O N F I D E N T I A L MANAMA 1511

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS : PFOR, MASS, BA

SUBJECT : SHAIKH KHALIFA, SHAIKH HAMAD AND MIDEASTFOR

REF : MANAMA 1408 AND RELATED

1. ADMIRAL CROWE HAS REPORTED THROUGH NAVY CHANNELS THE CONVERSATION HE HAD WITH HEIR APPARENT/MINISTER OF DEFENSE SHAIKH HAMAD BIN ISA AL KHALIFA ON SATURDAY AFTERNOON, OCT- BER 2. WHILE THE DETAILS ARE RELATED IN THE ADMIRAL'S MESSAGE, THE OVERALL THRUST -- OF MODERATION AND DESIRE AND PERHAPS ABILITY TO LEARN SOME LESSONS -- IS WORTH NOTING. IN IMMEDIATE TERMS, SHAIKH HAMAD'S APPARENT WILLINGNESS TO CONTINUE TO CONSIDER ACQUISITION OF THE HELICOPTER WING AS A FIRST PRIORITY FOR THE BAHRAIN DEFENSE FORCE IS NOTEWORTHY. SO IS HIS APPARENT UNDERSTANDING (REALISTICALLY REINFORCED BY THE ADMIRAL) OF THE PROBLEMS WHICH A REQUEST FOR F-5'S ENTAILS FOR THE USG. I USE THE WORD APPARENT REPEATEDLY ADVISEDLY SINCE I CONSIDER THE MAN MERCURIAL AND MUCH GIVEN TO MOMENTARY ENTHUSIASMS.

2. IN LONGER TERMS, SHAIKH HAMAD'S INITIATIVE WITH THE ADMIRAL IS REMARKABLE FOR OTHER REASONS. IT APPEARS THAT HE IS OPEN TO INSTRUCTION OR ANYWAY DISCUSSION OF SOME OF THE REALITIES OF THE WORLD IN WHICH HE AND WE LIVE. THIS IS VERY MUCH IN OUR MUTUAL INTEREST, IT SEEMS TO ME. SUCH DIALOGUE WITH THE USG HAS BEEN LACKING IN THE PAST.

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3. THE EMBASSY FOR OBVIOUS AND SOUND REASONS NORMALLY DEALS

WITH THE GOB THROUGH THE FOREIGN MINISTER. SINCE JUNE, HOWEVER, WE HAVE CLEARLY BEEN INVITED BY THE PRIME MINISTER TO DEAL DIRECTLY WITH HIM AND, IN REGARD TO SOME "DETAILS", WITH SHAIKH HAMAD. AS REFLECTED IN THE RECENT ATHERTON/FOREIGN MINISTER MEETING (STATE 246032), IT IS READILY APPARENT THAT THE FOREIGN MINISTER IS NOW NEITHER WELL-INFORMED ON THE PRIME MINISTER'S POSITION NOR, MORE IMPORTANTLY, WELL-DISPOSED TO OUR POSITION ON THE TENURE QUESTION.

4. IT FOLLOWS THAT, IF MAINTAINING MIDEASTFOR IN BAHRAIN FOR AN ADDITIONAL, IF LIMITED, PERIOD OF TIME BEYOND JUNE 1977 IS A TOP USG PRIORITY, THEN IT BEHOOVES US TO TAKE UP THE PRIME MINISTER'S INITIATIVE. BASIC TO "TAKING UP" WOULD BE DEALING DIRECTLY WITH HIM. WE HAVE NOT, WE THINK, BEEN INVITED BY THE PRIME MINISTER TO TAKE UP THE MATTER WITH THE GOB AS WE NORMALLY WOULD; I.E., VIA THE FOREIGN MINISTER. NOR HAVE WE BEEN INVITED TO TAKE THE POLICY MATTER UP WITH SHAIKH HAMAD - DESPITE HIS OFFER TO VISIT THE U.S. IN JAN/FEB 1977. THE PRIME MINISTER IS THE KEY MAN.

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